



CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Update on West Nile Virus Investigation

As of September 26, 2002, the total number of West Nile virus cases reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reached 2,206 with 108 deaths. Additionally, 32 states and Washington D.C. have reported human cases of West Nile virus in 2002. The state of Michigan is now reporting 314 human cases. Data suggests that the epidemic peaked in the southern states during the final week in August and within the last two weeks in northern states.

CDC is now reporting additional cases where blood transfusion is being investigated as a suspected cause of West Nile virus. In one case, two individuals who received blood products from the same donor both contracted West Nile virus infections. Both patients received transfusions, but only those from the common donor were found to carry West Nile virus. This case provides additional proof that the virus can be spread through blood products.

Additionally, CDC investigations of West Nile virus cases continue to yield new information about the virus. For the first time laboratory analysis shows that genetic material from the virus can be found in human breast milk. The case involves a nursing mother from Michigan, one of the two cases previously cited, who contracted West Nile virus infection. The woman has since recovered and the child remains healthy. It should be stressed that CDC has received no reports of West Nile virus transmission by breast milk. CDC continues its investigations of these cases.

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) protects people's health and safety by preventing and controlling diseases and injuries; enhances health decisions by providing credible information on critical health issues; and promotes healthy living through strong partnerships with local, national and international organizations.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES